
INTERSECTIONS

The Academic Affairs Chronicles

A Message From Dr. Rai

It has been an extraordinary year in Academic Affairs and at Montgomery College. Our response to the CCRCCA, a state law passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2013; implementation of our new division structure in 2014; and the approval of the Academic Master Plan and launch of its six initiatives in 2016, leave us with an institution that looks and feels different. Vibrant and visionary. Three years ago this summer, we launched the new structure designed to ensure a consistent student experience, collegewide academic leadership with content expertise, and chairs empowered to lead at the campus level. With the passage of the CCRCCA a year before, we had an enormous amount of work to do in a relatively short period of time – and we have done so much. Our programs meet the 60 credit-hours requirement or received a waiver. The General Education program has been transformed to meet the needs of the 80% of our credit students who intend to transfer needs. The achievement gap is being addressed by our Achieving the Promise initiative. An Academic Master Plan was developed that focuses our current efforts and position us for future efforts already on the horizon. The collaborations between credit and non-credit programs are expanding, and nowhere is that more evident than in the work being supported by over \$25 million, awarded in just three years by the Department of Labor.

All of this has been accomplished while you have addressed significant challenges and undertaken new and continuing initiatives in the name of student success. With a little help from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness we developed a Resource Toolkit to help us understand what and how our students are doing, to spot trends, and to identify where focused efforts would yield results. In response, you have instituted pedagogical practices that have increased engagement, innovation and rigor, while maintaining high academic standards, and we are seeing success. Because of your work, based on data informed decisions, our students are more successful.

The next iteration of the Resource Toolkit will be available shortly, but we can see success through the President's Score Card. The President's Score Card itself has gone through a change this year as more data is being utilized to focus on students' progress toward completion. The Score Card kept the framework of our IPEDS reporting requirements, but went one step further. The basic information on graduation and transfer rates has expanded to include how students have done in Gateway Courses over the past three years. For example:

- In 2013, only 58.2% of new students attempted English in their first year, while in 2015, 78.5% attempted English in their first year here.

- In 2013, 61.3% of new students needed developmental math and only 19.2% of those students completed their developmental math in their first year. In 2015, 63.3% needed developmental math and 44.1% completed their developmental coursework in the first year.
- Fall-to-fall return rates have risen from 59.8% in 2013 to 64.8% in 2015.
- Graduation rates have increased from 16.4% to 17.9%. While transfer (without graduating first) has decreased slightly from 25.5% to 24.7%, our combined 3-year graduation and transfer rate in 2014 which had dropped to 36.5%, bounced back to 42.6% in 2015. More students earning a degree before transferring is major goal. These students are more likely to earn their next degree.
- The course pass rate has increased 1.1% over the last three years. This may seem like a small percentage change, but it translates to over a thousand additional courses passed. How many more degrees and certificates does this represent?

The work you are doing is making a difference and will make a difference in the coming years as we continue to develop and implement Program Success Strategies, DFW Reduction and Plus 2 Initiatives, and the Academic Master Plan initiatives. Assessment of the programmatic changes we have incorporated over these last several years is ongoing.

The conclusion of each academic year provides an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of students and colleagues, alike. I am incredibly proud of the faculty and staff who were chosen by their peers as this years' award winners. Reading the letters of support citing the qualifications and sharing the stories that illustrate award winning qualities is humbling and gratifying. Equally inspiring are the stories of our students who you have shaped to be this years' Board Scholars, President's Scholars, Harry Hardin Award winners, participants in the Beacon Conference as well as our own Cherry Blossom Humanities and STEM Student Research Conferences.

This year has also been extraordinary as events - around the world, across the nation, and in our backyard – have challenged us to help our students and each other find respectful, honest, and civil ways to confront issues, opinions, and beliefs that differ from our own. Again, I am humbled and grateful for the ways that you have reached out to students and to each other, in and out of the classroom, enabling the exchange of ideas. This is the genesis of tolerance, understanding, respect, and radical inclusion.

Sanjay

General Education Program Update

by Sharon Anthony

“Signature assignments? Integrative learning? Metacognitive reflection? What do these terms mean, and how do they affect my courses?” You may have heard these questions being asked in campus hallways and meeting rooms over the past few months. In fact, academic disciplines throughout the college are abuzz with talk about General Education theory and practice these days as all General Education courses are applying for recertification and all degree programs are aligning to the new Gen Ed credit requirements.

All Gen Ed courses at MC will now reflect the latest, most exciting and effective qualities of general education, reflecting nationwide trends and research. To this end, MC Gen Ed courses now consistently will incorporate integrative learning, life skills, and awareness of the role and value of leadership and civic engagement. Additionally, each course will feature a signature assignment to

leadership and civic engagement. Additionally, each course will feature a signature assignment to challenge students to apply course content in rigorous ways that require creative and critical problem-solving as well as, often, an interdisciplinary vision. The Gen Ed Committee, with support from Follett Bookstores and the Office of Academic Affairs, offered a collegewide Gen Ed Conference on March 22nd, attended by almost 100 faculty, exploring these topics of signature assignments and integrative learning. A large team of 14 MC faculty also attended a national AAC&U conference in February to learn more about such Gen Ed theory and practice.

The Math Foundation and Humanities Distribution courses have just completed their Gen Ed course certification process, and the Behavioral and Social Sciences as well as the Natural Sciences (lab and non-lab) courses are currently in the midst of their course reviews with the Gen Ed Standing Committee (GESC). These reviews will wrap up in the fall.

Art Distribution and English Foundation courses' Gen Ed Course Certification packets are due at the end of May, and they will undergo GESC review next academic year.

To assist faculty work groups as they re-envision their Gen Ed courses and apply for Gen Ed recertification, a training video has been created (<http://faculty.montgomerycollege.edu/gbarron2/genedcoursecertification/>), and the Gen Ed CAPs can meet with faculty, offer suggestions, and provide feedback on the Gen Ed Course Certification packets. These Gen Ed CAPs currently are Melissa McCeney, John Wang, and Ishrat Rahman.

So, if you are wondering about integrative learning, signature assignments, Global and Cultural Perspectives designation benchmarks, or Gen Ed credit requirements for any MC degree – or any other Gen Ed-related concern -- simply reach out to the Gen Ed Committee at GenEd@montgomerycollege.edu. We are happy to work with you!

Gen Ed Is Going Online:

As further good news, the Gen Ed Course Certification form will become an online document, beginning in fall 2017!

AMP Implementation: Credit for Prior Learning

The new Academic Master Plan has identified one of the first five-year initiatives as a review and update of Credit for Prior Learning practices and procedures, to improve access to CPL, and to increase the number of students using this alternative method of completing credit.

This goal is timely, as the College continues to see an increasing number of enrolled adult-learners, high school students with exam credit, and military-related personnel. Each of these populations brings with them experience and knowledge that should be rewarded with credit towards their credential.

The first, significant, step in implementing this initiative was to reorganize the current structure of Credit for Prior Learning. To do so, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have agreed to consolidating both the function and the responsibility within the SVPAA office.

The objective of this consolidation is to accomplish multiple goals:

- To develop a single location for the campus community to view policies, procedures, requirements, and program offerings
- To reduce the amount of incorrect, repetitive, or inconsistent information shared with the college community
- To begin to identify and measure outcomes for the Credit for Prior Learning program, as required by MSCHE and the Academic Master Plan
- To engage faculty in determining equivalencies and the awarding of academic credit for prior learning

The SVPAA's office will take the lead on consolidating all Credit for Prior Learning websites. A single page will be developed that contains information about non-traditional exams, military credit, and credit by exam. Portfolio Assessment and other forms of CPL will be added as they become readily available. This page is expected to launch over the summer.

The review and evaluation process of nationally-recognized exams (CLEP, AP, IB, DSST, Cambridge and others as necessary) will transfer from Records/Transcript Evaluation to the SVPAA's office. Working with faculty, these exams will be re-evaluated based on recent curriculum changes, and a new process will be developed to have the exams evaluated on a routine basis and/or when course outcomes or content change. The College is looking at using online software to expedite and ease this review, which will be conducted during the fall semester.

In the future months, the CPL Academic Plan Implementation Team will begin working on identifying next steps for expanding the types of credit we accept, the process to evaluate these credits, and how to integrate these opportunities into the college curriculum.

News from WD&CE: U.S. Secretary of Education Visits Montgomery County Correctional Facility



In recognition of National Reentry Week, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos visited the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) in Boyds, Maryland, to learn about the facility's education programs and to also learn more about the nexus of education and workforce development as it relates to Reentry. While at the Correctional Facility, Secretary DeVos met the County's Department of Correction and Rehabilitation Director Robert Green and his staff along with Montgomery College President Dr. DeRionne Pollard, and other representatives from Montgomery College; Montgomery County Public Schools; and WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.

Secretary DeVos took the time to engage with inmates taking classes and other opportunities to better prepare themselves for a return to society and reduce the chance of recidivism.

"My visit to Montgomery County Correctional Facility was encouraging and inspiring, said Secretary DeVos. "MCCF offers integrated, onsite education and career development services through its American Job Center. This center provides full-time GED, vocational and special

education programs, and assists incarcerated individuals with skills assessments, job searches and further education planning before their release.”

For incarcerated youth and adults whose goal is to turn their lives around, access to education has proven to be transformative. When men and women return to society better prepared for meaningful employment, the benefits extend beyond their own lives. They have the potential to rejoin society as positive, engaged, contributing members of their communities and workplaces.

The MCCF was selected by the Secretary’s Director of Correctional Education due to the facility and its programs delivering high-quality reentry education and training to their population.

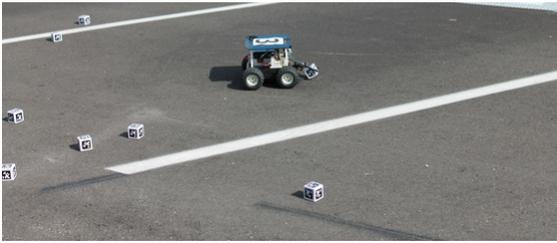
MC Students Win 2017 NASA Swarmathon Virtual Competition

The NASA Swarmathon is a challenge to develop cooperative robotics to revolutionize space exploration. Teams of students from Minority Serving Universities and Community Colleges developed algorithms for autonomous robot swarms to search and collect resources on Mars.

The challenge is organized in two separate parts, a Physical Competition where actual robots search for and collect physical cubes representing resources, and a Virtual Competition where the robots and cubes are simulated and the robots interact with a virtual environment. A team from Montgomery College under Computer Science/Engineering faculty mentor Dr. David Kuijt spent the Spring 2017 semester learning and programming robots to compete in the Virtual Competition; **Montgomery College was one of 15 teams selected to compete in the Virtual Competition.** This is the second year of the Swarmathon Competition, and the first year that Montgomery College has participated.

In the two preliminary rounds of the Virtual





Competition, the robots using the code programmed by the Montgomery College team collected 188 cubes, more than the combined total number of cubes collected by all nine of the other teams that managed to submit code. In the quarter finals MC's robots still performed well enough to advance but were overcoming major issues; the same thing happened in the semifinals. **In the final round of the competition MC's robots managed to win by a score of 20 cubes to 16, defeating the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and winning first place in the NASA Swarmathon Virtual Competition and a \$3,000 prize.**



The Montgomery College team is planning to celebrate their victory by signing up for the Physical Competition next year; within a few months they will

be testing their code on physical robots in a segment of the campus parking lots.

Congratulations to our outstanding Swarmathon team: Jalalah Abdullah, Denys Fedorchuk, Denis Tra Bi, Rebekah Newby, Michael Bailey, Amit Millo, Shayan Taslim, Michael Tang, Huyen Vu, Daniel Levine, Abhi Sharma, Suriya Iqbal, and Logan Wallace!

For more information about the event, please visit <http://nasaswarmathon.com/>

Student Success

Mariame Sylla, Montgomery Scholar '12, graduated with an AS from Montgomery College and a BS from Amherst College, MA. She applied to 26 highly rated medical schools, and was offered interviews at all 26. She will attend Harvard University Medical School.



Dr. Vincent Intondi Selected as Commencement Speaker at SUNY Oswego



Dr. Vincent Intondi, professor of history at Montgomery College, was selected to address the graduates at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences commencement ceremony at the State University of New York Oswego (SUNY Oswego) on May 13.

Dr. Intondi is a member of the class of 2003 at SUNY Oswego where he earned a master's degree in history. He was awarded a bachelor's degree in economics at SUNY Potsdam.

"I am honored to deliver the commencement address at SUNY Oswego," Dr. Intondi said. "It means a

great deal to me in that I get the opportunity to give back to a school that did so much for me and a chance to speak to new students about the opportunities that await them and to show them what is possible with a degree from SUNY Oswego."

SAVE THE DATE

Adult/Experiential Learning Seminar

Please join us for a visit from Wilson Finch, senior consultant with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), who will be speaking about Experiential and Prior Learning Assessment, specifically discussing national initiatives, best practices, data trends and analysis, and the impact this credit awarding system has on learning.

Monday, June 12th
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Rockville Campus, SC-151

RSVP at <http://tinyurl.com/caelatmc>

For additional information, please contact Seth Kamen at x74255 or seth.kamen@montgomerycollege.edu

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